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USDOJ:

I do not believe that the remedies proposed in the news are going to have a significant impact on Microsoft's predatory marketing practices, and their continued abuse of monopoly power.

Take, for example, the internet browser issue. Before the beginning of the anti-trust case against them, Microsoft began bundling their browser at no cost with their Windows operating system, essentially driving all other browsers out of the market. They have always claimed that they have a right to do this and that they are only serving consumer needs.

Unfortunately for consumers, in their most recent version--now included with all browsers shipped with the new Windows XP--Microsoft has made a significant change: they no longer support industry-standard, third-party browser plug-ins. These plug-ins allow the presentation of specialized content, such as movies, sound, animation, and virtual reality.

This means that third-party content providers, such as Real Audio, Macromedia Flash, Adobe PDF, and Apple QuickTime, to name a few, no longer function under Microsoft's browsers using the standard installation procedure. Instead, they must provide special installations that go through an additional layer of software--Active X--that Microsoft's own content-provisioning software can avoid.

This means that ordinary consumers will have to struggle needlessly to install third-party content-provisioning software, but more importantly, the third-party plug-ins will run more slowly and with less capability than the Microsoft "default" install (which, of course, uses MS's own XP-bundled software).

This also means that some 90% of new computers sold cannot properly access some web sites (say, sites containing Apple's QuickTime or RealNetwork's RealAudio media content), whereas 90% of Windows XP computers could. (Again, all these issues are cropping up only because MS is purposely deleting, bypassing, or internally changing tried-and-true internet standards in order to "push" their own software exclusively.)

Now that Microsoft is beginning to exert control over content-provisioning, content itself may be targeted next. Seriously think about it, within a short span of years, it is very possible that the average consumer with an "out-of-the-box" computer may be unable to view any content not provided, or sanctioned, by Microsoft. (Remember Standard Oil?)

With this illicit behavior, Microsoft not only successfully extended their operating system monopoly into the internet browser market (already an abuse of monopoly power), but also have extended this monopoly control into the content provider market! Basically, they have broken the law once, and while being penalized, have broken it again. This is wrong; the penalties and decrees currently being proposed are inadequate and will not stop this illicit behavior. Destroying companies by sheer force and size (causing people to lose jobs as a result), taking away choice from consumers, and eliminating competition are NOT the way American companies should be allowed to do business...the penalties and restrictions imposed on Microsoft (short of an AT&T-style break-up) need to be, must be, harsher.

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